

**Statewide Adoption and Permanency**

**Network *and* Independent Living Services**

**2015 Summer Statewide Meeting**

**Office of Children, Youth and Families Updates**

**Farewell, Dave!**

After 16 years with the Office of Children, Youth and Families, Dave Derbes has accepted the position of Child Welfare Policy Director at Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children. We will miss Dave and wish him the best with his future endeavors! During this time of transition, please contact OCYF’s main office at (717) 787-3985, or Lorrie Deck at lodeck@pa.gov or via telephone at (717) 772-7046

**2015 Independent Living Youth Retreat:**

Mark your calendars for the 2015 Older Youth Retreat: *Youth Always Belong!* The retreat will be held August 10-14, 2015 at the University of Pittsburgh’s Johnstown Campus. Registration for youth will be coordinated through county children and youth agencies. For more information, visit the Youth Advisory Board’s website, <http://www.independentlivingpa.org>.

[**Protecting**](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/) **Pennsylvania’s Children from Abuse and Neglect:**

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed the website, [KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/), to serve as the hub for information related to critical components impacting child protection including a link for mandated reporters to make reports of suspected child abuse electronically, training on child abuse recognition and reporting, information related to clearances and general information related to child protection.

The Department has also collaborated with the University of Pittsburgh’s Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) to develop a free web-based training on recognizing and reporting child abuse. This training is approved in accordance with Act 126 of 2012 and Act 31 of 2104 for mandated and permissive reporters and can be found at [www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu](http://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/).

Questions about amendments to the Child Protective Services law may be emailed to ra-pwcpslquestions@pa.gov.

**Chafee Education and Training Grant Program:**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2015-2016 school year and directions on how to apply are available online at: <https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml>. The 2015-2016 maximum ETG award is tentatively set at $4,500 per student, not to exceed their cost of attendance.

Please continue to spread the word about the ETG for youth who are, or were, in out of home placement or adopted after age 16.  Youth ARE NOT required to participate in a formal IL program to be eligible to apply and receive an award.  Timely completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Pennsylvania State Grant and ETG applications is important.

All current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete the ETG application.

For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.  If you work with youth receiving services who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find state information on the ETG programs at the Foster Care to Success website: [www.fc2sprograms.org](http://www.fc2sprograms.org).  Each state has its own individual application process.

If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or at (717) 214-6765.

**PHEAA State Grant:**The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) reports that a significant portion of Chafee ETG youth have not applied or reapplied for the PHEAA State Grant. This means that some youth may have taken out loans that must be repaid and/or have used limited ETG funds, resulting in the reduction in the maximum award amounts for ETG. Staff are encouraged to educate and assist all college students annually to apply for the PHEAA State Grant. To apply for the State Grant, a youth must first complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Most renewal students need only update their information to reapply. Please see the PHEAA website, Pennsylvania State Grant Program at [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org).

Note that State Grant deadlines are different for first-time applicants and renewal applicants. If you find a youth has missed the deadline, apply anyway. Late applications may qualify for awards if funding permits.

**SWAN Media:**

We anticipate that the filming of our next round of the media campaign, #MeetTheKids, will begin sometime this fall. The current #MeetTheKids campaign will air on network and cable television advertisements throughout the month of June in the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg/Lancaster markets and online media efforts include Pandora Radio, Google/Yahoo/MSN searches and Facebook.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families. Please contact Joe Warrick for additional information at jwarrick@pa.gov or (717) 214-6765.

**Waiting Child Segments:**

SWAN’s media contractor funds three waiting child segments across the state designed to find adoptive families for older youth in need of families. *Waiting Child* is aired on KDKA TV 2, a Pittsburgh CBS affiliate, *Val’s Kids* is aired on WHTM abc 27 in the Harrisburg area; and *A Little Love* is aired on WBRE TV 28, a Wilkes-Barre NBC affiliate. Waiting child segments have proven to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for the children of PA.

If you have a child you would like featured on KDKA’s, ***Waiting Child***, please contact Ja-Neen Jones at Three Rivers Adoption Council at jjones@3riversadopt.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM’s, ***Val’s Kids***, please contact Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WBRE’s, ***A Little Love,*** please contact Jill Ferraro Bruce at jferrarobruce@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-7292.

**National Youth In Transition Database:**

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) implementation is ongoing with the Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), the Served Population (any youth receiving an IL service regardless of age.), and the Follow-up 21 Population collection period (through September 30, 2015). NYTD questions can be directed to Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or (717) 214-6765.

**SWAN ListServ through Google Groups:**The SWAN ListServ through Google Groups **is comprised of county children and youth agency workers and SWAN affiliate agency workers. The goal of the group is to facilitate special needs adoptions throughout PA.  All information posted on this site is confidential.  Anyone wishing to join this group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency or SWAN affiliate agency. If interested, please contact Joe Warrick by email at** jwarrick@pa.gov or at **(717) 214-6765.**

**SWAN-IL Network Newsletter:**

Tell the Network about all of the wonderful things you, your agency, your community, a youth or a colleague are doing to promote improved outcomes for PA’s foster youth. If you have something exciting, interesting or informative to share with your colleagues, please forward your articles, success stories, matching events or ideas to Karen Lollo at

klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242. Pictures are always a great addition to any article. You can find the latest and past editions of this newsletter at [www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org) under the Network Newsletter link.

**Get Connected:**

Like us on Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/adoptpa](http://www.facebook.com/adoptpa)

 Subscribe to our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/adoptpakids](http://www.youtube.com/adoptpakids)

 Visit our webpage at [www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org)